

A New Experience

For many stock show families, show season is coming to an end. They have had countless hours of hard work, dollars and thought put into halter breaking, the growing of hair and showmanship training since preparing for the Junior National Hereford Expo. Then, when it's over, it seems as if they go right into the American Royal, Louisville and Reno national shows. If those were not enough, there are state fairs, Faces of Leadership conference and a lot of the other obligations.

For me, going to Denver and Ft. Worth was a great way to end a showing season. Though I did not show at either of these shows, I was still able to be a part of them through the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) board.

Being on the board has provided me with many things, such as

having the opportunity to be a leader and a spokesperson for the Hereford breed as well as giving me a new goal. Before I was on the board, my goal was to be like the people in the maroon jackets and to have people look up to me the way I looked up to them. Now that I am on the board, my goal is to reach the expectations and high standards that I held for those on the board when I was a young junior.

Being able to attend all of the national shows is part of what makes being on the board so amazing. Before I became a director, I had never been to the American Royal, Denver or Ft. Worth shows, and now I have been to all three of them and been right in the action.

Denver last year was amazing because I had never been and it was an awesome new experience. This year, I knew it would still be a great show, but I thought it would be different since I had already experienced it — I was wrong. I still got to the Yards and could not get enough of it. I walked up on the catwalk and looked over into all of the pens and was still in awe. Denver is also special because it is the first time in the new year that I get to see my fellow directors on the junior board.

People come from all over the country to see the National Western Stock Show. Even if a person does not have cattle to take to the show, it is a date marked on the calendar. It is a great place to talk to producers and to meet with old and new friends.

Up on the Hill, I was able to help with bull weigh-in, selling programs and vests, and working as ring help. I was able to talk to every person that got a program whether it was to help that individual pick out a size for a red show vest or to have an in-depth conversation to catch up and to meet people.

My favorite part, though, is working in the ring. I get to see the cattle up close and to help tail them in. I get to talk to and work with the judge and to see people ringside as they, not so patiently, wait for the judge to pull each head.

First time in Texas

This year, I got to experience yet another first. I attended the Fort Worth Stock Show, and not only that, but it was also my first time in the great state of Texas. From the giant showing to the hundreds of cowboy hats and from walking the barns to walking around the stockyards in Cowtown, Ft. Worth did not disappoint.

When I got to the barn, I was taken in by my great Hereford family and felt very welcomed to Texas. I attended the sale and watched many great cattle circle the sale ring, including several pens of newborn calves, which were most definitely a crowd favorite. That night I went to the Texas Hereford Association's social and got to meet with my advisors and the queens along with friends and my Hereford family.

The next day was one of the best days I have had at any show. I worked the ring with our judge, Matt Copeland, along with some excellent ring help — two of our best AHA field representatives.

After the champions were slapped on the hip, I was able to see some of the great parts of Ft. Worth outside the barns. I went down to the stockyards and explored all of the shops, saddle stools and restaurants. I cannot wait to go back next year and many years after that. I am even more excited to see what new experiences I gain during my last year on the NJHA board. **HW**



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